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Depopulation in the Concept of Sustainable Development

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1. Introduction

The concept of sustainable development was first used in 1713 by H.C. von Carlowitz in his deliberations on the crisis in the mining industry and the idea of sustainable forest management (Najder-Stefaniak 2017, p. 191). In the public debate, it was used again in the 1970s as a response to the fuel crises and the perceived environmental consequences of economic development and resource constraints. Initially, sustainable development was defined as *development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It* contains within it two key concepts:

a) *the concept of 'needs', in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and*
b) *the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs* (Our Common Future 1987).

The concept has not become normative, although it has been enshrined in numerous documents and acts of international and national law (Kenig-Witkowska 2018, p. 28-29). An example is Article 5 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland, in which the legislator refers to an undefined concept of sustainable development as a principle to be followed by the Polish state in its actions.

In further considerations, sustainable development is understood *as a paradigm based on an over-egocentric system of values – the recognition of one's humanity as a compass for personal and social development and other complementarily connected aspects of development – economic and environmental*. (Borys 2019) The analysis of the concept expressed in relation to man, his place and role in the world, allows to indicate the process of evolution from an integrated approach to environmental, human, and development problems (Kenig-

Witkowska 2018, p. 29) to the search for opportunities to shape 'proper relations' between the human, natural, and economic capital. The foundations of the concept have also been laid for trends which, while declaring their use of the concept of sustainable development, express a clear hostility towards human existence (hereinafter referred to as depopulation trends). As a result of the activities of UN agencies, they are gaining more and more importance in the global dimension.

Depopulation trends are characterized by an approach that takes away human subjectivity and a special place and function, determined by the Creator that makes the Earth subject to themselves. Man perceived as a form of capital is contrasted with and equivalent to natural and economic capital. As a consequence, it is subject to shaping, management, assessment of its usefulness and effectiveness, as well as reduction. The development of depopulation trends is based on the desire of their supporters to build a new global economic and social order. In fact, these trends negate the essence of sustainable development, which by definition cannot assume the existence of phenomena such as depopulation, failure to respect the institution of the family, low remuneration, widespread use of abortion or euthanasia. These phenomena are evidence of unsustainable development.

The paper presents an attempt to characterize depopulation trends in the concept of sustainable development and analyze their impact on structural changes. As indicated by the authors of numerous publications, the problem of depopulation will be one of the main problems of the 21st century. Current research indicates the global, national, and regional dimension of the phenomenon. The consequences of depopulation processes are strongly felt in Europe, Japan, and China. Among the highly developed countries, the population is growing in Australasia (New Zealand and Australia) (Jackson 2014).

2. Roots of depopulation concepts

The concept of depopulation derives directly from eugenics, which was dynamically developing in the USA before World War II and was implemented and developed by Nazi Germany. Formally, depopulation efforts in the post-war period were initiated by the World Population Conference (WPC) in Bucharest, Romania, in August 1974 and the resulting World Population Plan of Action (WPPA 1974). The document indicates the risks to sustainable development arising from population growth. It calls for population policy to become an integral part of economic and social policy. Actions aimed at reducing the population must not contribute to limiting development activities. At the same time, the document defines reproductive rights to control and limit the population.

The document presenting the comprehensive concept of global depopulation together with the tools of its implementation is the *National Security Study Memorandum*, kept secret until the 1990s. *NSSM 200. Implications of Worldwide*

Population Growth for U.S. Security and Overseas Interests (The Kissinger Report) (Kissinger 1974). Population growth in underdeveloped but resource-rich countries is identified by The Kissinger Report as the most important threat to the political and economic security of the US and other developed countries (Kissinger 1974, p. 57). The proposed remedy to the identified risks is a global fertility reduction strategy (Kissinger 1974, p. 74), based on the promotion of lifestyles alternative to parenthood, the development of contraception (Kissinger 1974, p. 110) and the assurance and promotion of abortion as a basic human right (Kissinger 1974, p. 114-120).

A significant event in the development of depopulation trends was also the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo in 1994, which resulted in The Cairo consensus. As its supporters and promoters point out, the Cairo consensus is based on values such as gender equality, sexual and reproductive health, and reproductive rights. The importance of this consensus for the development of depopulation is demonstrated by the words of Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, Executive Director of UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund: *Cairo was a landmark meeting at which 179 governments agreed on a comprehensive set of actions to ensure universal access to reproductive health information and services, uphold fundamental human rights, reduce poverty, secure gender equality, protect the environment, and strengthen the institutions of democracy* (Obaid 2004). Attempts to block key depopulation mechanisms contained in the Cairo consensus have been made by the Vatican.

Depopulation roots should also be sought in the ongoing economic processes. The basic barrier to realising the neoclassical paradigm of continuous economic growth and wealth creation is the scarcity of natural resources coexisting with a growing population. The scarcity of resources excludes the possibility of a continuous increase in production and material consumption, as well as a levelling of wealth among the existing global population.

In the pre-industrial period, similar to the natural phenomena, technological progress and an increase in production contributed to a proportional increase in the population. The availability of food and goods satisfying basic needs, the increase in the quality of life meant that more and more of the newborn children lived to the procreative age. As a result, the population grew, the wealth of the individual remained stable or increased slightly. The decline in population and wealth was caused by epidemics, wars, and natural disasters. Since the Industrial Revolution, the technical and technological progress has served primarily to increase the wealth of the individual. The improvement in the quality of life and wealth is not accompanied by a proportional increase in the number of births (Fig. 1).

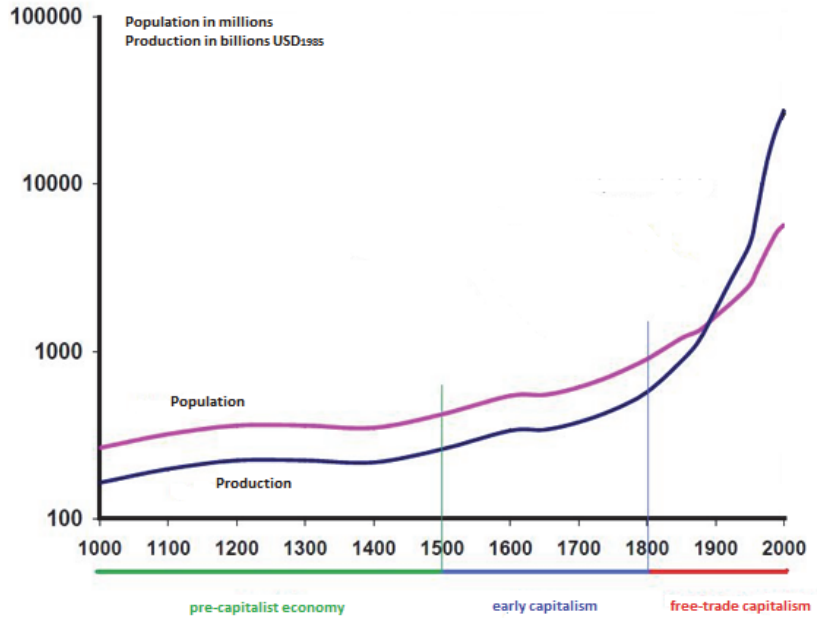


Fig. 1. Population and production in the world

Source: author's own work based on (Lucas 2010)

The globalisation process, the technological revolution, the ongoing changes in the functioning of the labour market constantly lead to the release of a growing part of the population from the labour market. The population consumes limited resources, contributes less to wealth creation, and needs to be managed. In the future, as indicated by U. Beck, workers' privileges acquired in the 20th century in rich countries will be rejected. A worker will have to work more and more for a lower wage and with worse social security coverage (Beck 2002, p. 26). To an increasing extent, the work performed by people is worthless and has the character of activities *that are supposed to bring only money to people – these are jobs that no one in the world would have to do, should not do or would not simply do if they were not paid for* (Lewis 2014, p. 91).

According to the theory of competitive advantage of M. Porter's nations, in modern conditions, the competitive advantage is determined by the resources of highly qualified employees with competences necessary for specific industries (Porter 1990). Human capital therefore constitutes a resource selected on the basis of criteria of productivity, creativity, and specialisation of individuals. The importance of highly qualified employees with the competences necessary for specific sectors is confirmed by the forecasts for the demand for specialists prepared

for highly developed countries. For example, the German economy will lack 3 million skilled workers in 2030. In the perspective of 2040 this number will increase to 3.3 million people (Prognos AG 2015). At the same time, as a result of automation, automotive, transport, and financial services sectors will lose importance. People currently employed in these industries will become economically redundant. According to the projections presented by Pricewaterhouse-Coopers – by the early 2030s – the U.S. will lose 38 percent of existing jobs to automation. U.K. is expected to lose – 30%, Germany – 35% and Japan – 21% of jobs, respectively to machines within the same time frame (Pricewaterhouse-Coopers 2017).

3. The importance of population size for economic growth and development

Globally, there are two main approaches to perceiving population as a factor of economic growth and development: the approach of highly developed countries (depopulation approach) and the approach represented by the Middle Kingdom. The highly developed countries' approach is based on the principle of increasing marginal efficiency. According to this principle, each successive unit of resource should be used more efficiently than the previous one, each successive human being more productive, creative, and specialized.

The proponents of a population policy based on depopulation (among them: Ban Ki-Moon, former UN Secretary, Jeffrey Sachs, economist, Hans Joachim Schellnhuber, German atmospheric physicist, Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft, Ted Turner, CNN Chief Executive Officer, George Soros, David Rockefeller Junior, Oprah Winfrey), as a tool to eliminate the barrier of resource scarcity, propose to reduce the global population and maintain a stable, reduced population in the future. Depopulation is presented as a tool for the implementation of the principle of intergenerational equality enshrined in the 1987 Our Common Future, an expression of concern for the living conditions of future generations and the negative effects of overcrowding of the Earth (such as rapid degradation of the global natural environment, extreme poverty, famine and chronic malnutrition, illiteracy, drama of people with disabilities, military conflicts, the often tragic consequences of mass migration) and the creation of decent living conditions for people on the planet. At the same time, they reject calls for changes in existing patterns of production and consumption, including abandoning the strategy of increasing consumption through the ageing of products and continuous creation of new needs of the inhabitants of highly developed countries.

In economic terms, the reduction of population combined with increased resource efficiency and measures to decouple economic growth from natural resources should enable continuous and unrestricted economic growth. In the

ecological dimension, depopulation is to be used to reduce environmental pressure, and in the social and political dimension, it is treated as a tool to eliminate conflicts between the rich and the poor (Fig. 2).

CityGroup pointed to the process of extreme economic stratification of societies and the resulting threats in 2005 by introducing the concept of *plutonomy* (Equity Strategy 2005). According to the data of Oxfam humanitarian organisation, in 2016 one percent of the richest people owned more wealth than the rest of humanity. The high rate of concentration of wealth in the hands of a small group of the richest people is noteworthy (Piontek 2015). These inequalities are contested in surveys that take into account the differences in population among countries (Woźniak 2006). The reduction of poverty is also indicated by United Nations' documents, according to which the number of people in the world living in extreme poverty has more than halved compared to the year 1990[1].

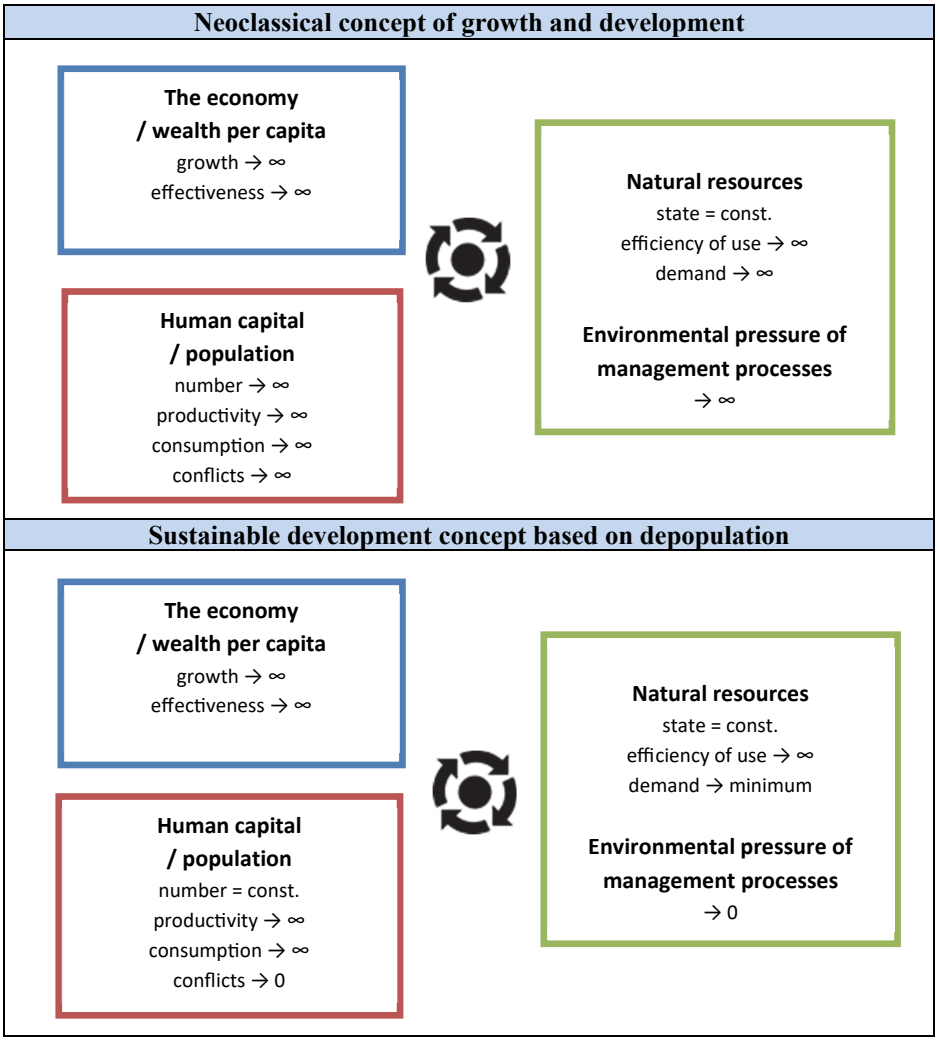
A different approach to the importance of human capital in quantitative terms is characteristic of China, which recognises the importance of the country's population for development and global expansion. During[2] the Meeting Marking the 30th Anniversary of Reform and Opening Up, Hu Jintao pointed out the following: *These efforts and achievements vividly demonstrate the power of the Party and the Chinese government, which are developing in tandem with the reform and opening policy, the power of China's 1.3 billion population as it advances, the power of reform and opening and the power of socialism with Chinese characteristics*. (Juntao 2008) In 2015 China ended its one-child policy conducted since 1979 by allowing the citizens to have two children (End of one-child policy 2018). In the wake of growing demographic problems, the government introduced incentive schemes for having a second child (cash incentives, tax breaks, extension of maternity leave). Works are underway to remove from the Civil Code all regulations concerning family planning in terms of children and legalization of surrogate parenting since 2020 (China One-child policy 2019).

At the same time, as part of its population policy, since 2014 China has been implementing a system of control and evaluation of citizens named the Social Credit System. In the system, citizens receive 'positive' points for behaviours desired by state authorities (for complying with the law, promoting ethical behaviour in society and 'good deeds,' e.g. donating blood or volunteering). Citizens committing violations of the law and established rules are subject to penalties in the form of deduction of points. Rewards and privileges are given to highly rated citizens (e.g. discounts on electricity and heating, cheaper public transport or priority in

[1] http://www.un.org.pl/cel1 (access on 5.03.2019).

[2] Secretary General of the Communist Party of China from 2002 to 2012, President of the People's Republic from 2003 to 2013, Chairman of the Central Military Commission from 2004 to 2012, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hu_Jintao (access on 10.03.2019).

hospital admissions). Penalties are imposed on people with low ratings, such as: denied access to prestigious places, loss of the right to travel abroad, slower Internet, limitation of the right to use public transport. Starting from 2020, the system will be extended to all residents of the Middle Kingdom (Szewerniak 2018).



Legend: „→" – heading towards

Fig. 2. Growth and development mechanism in the neoclassical concept of growth and development and the concept of sustainable development based on depopulation

Source: author's own work

China's global expansion is driven, inter alia, by the 'One Belt, One Road' (OBOR) initiative of the Chinese government to connect China with the countries located along the ancient Silk Road and the new Maritime Silk Road. The preceding and accompanying action is the promotion of the internationalisation of the yuan by China since 2009 (Wang 2016). The OBOR Project is a strictly globalistic concept and in the long term serves the purpose of liquidating nation states. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres assessed the project as consistent with the UN Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030. As he pointed out, *the initiatives are aimed at beneficial cooperation and the development of networks between countries and regions in terms of infrastructure, finance, trade, and people.* (PAP, IAR 2017) In 2008, Hu Jintao, quoted above, in a speech addressed to the highest authorities of China and the Central Military Commission, declared the following: *'We will use our open policy, seize the economic crisis in the West as a historical moment, and use effective measures to turn them into Socialist China's economic and cultural colonies. Our colonization of these countries is the historical process of communism's triumph over rotten capitalism. We Chinese communists must shoulder the great historical mission, and use socialism to defeat capitalism, eventually liberating the entire humanity with Communism.'* (Newman 2016). The cited quotation clearly indicates hostile motives of Chinese economic expansion. The analysis of the strategy of China's ongoing economic expansion in Africa shows that it is dictated by three reasons: the pursuit of the appropriation and exploitation of African natural resources, the possibility of finding work for Chinese citizens and the acquisition of new markets (demand) for the growing production potential. Currently, this expansion has a dimension of economic expansion declared as cooperation based on the win-win principle and expansion through settlement, which in the long term is to lead to the creation of a 'Chinese continent in Africa.' (French 2014).

4. Depopulation in international instruments

The concept of depopulation in the 1990s was implemented into the concept of sustainable development. It is currently included in most international programming, strategic, and religious documents. It occupies an important place in economic, social, and natural sciences.

The most orthodox supporters of the depopulation concept are calling for a reduction in the world population of at least 90%, so that it does not exceed 500 million. The material expression of their views is the granite monument (Fig. 3) set up in 1980 in Elbert County in State of Georgia (USA) containing a ten-point declaration written in eight contemporary and four ancient languages (Babylonian, ancient Greek, Sanskrit, and Egyptian hieroglyphics), including the following postulates: *Maintain humanity under 500,000,000 in perpetual balance with*

nature (point 1), *Be not a cancer on the earth – Leave room for nature — Leave room for nature* (point 10)[3].

Fig. 3 The Georgia Guidestones – coordinates 34°13′55.40″N 82°53′39.80″W

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georgia_Guidestones (access on 20.12.2018)

In view of the admissible volume of the paper, an extensive examination of the documents must be limited to selected documents, in particular the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement. The first of these documents is an action plan for people, the planet, prosperity, and the strengthening of universal peace in conditions of greater freedom. The declarative statements characteristic of the Agenda (we are determined to eliminate, protect, ensure) and the pursuit of a deep global revolution in economic, political, and social life (including global equality, justice and the elimination of social classes) indicate the intentions of the authors of the document, which are to build a new global order drawing on the system of values contained in *The Communist Manifesto* (Marx, Engels 1848) whose authors were the Italian communists T*he Ventotene Manifesto* (Spinelli, Rossii, Colorni 1941).

In the context of the analysis of depopulation trends, among the objectives of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1), the following ones are noteworthy:

[3] The Georgia Guidestones, coordinates 34°13′55.40″N82°53′39.80″W.

a) Goal People – *We are determined to end poverty and hunger, in all their forms and dimensions, and to ensure that all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment*,
b) Goal Planet – *We are determined to protect the planet from degradation, including through sustainable consumption and production, sustainably managing its natural resources and taking urgent action on climate change, so that it can support the needs of the present and future generations*,
c) Goal Prosperity – *We are determined to ensure that all human beings can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives and that economic, social and technological progress occurs in harmony with nature*.

It is impossible to achieve these objectives in conditions of limited resources, acceptance of the neoclassical paradigm of continuous economic growth and growing global population. The state of global equity, sustainable consumption, and sustainable resource management can only be achieved through population reduction. A detailed analysis of the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development allows us to formulate a thesis that its authors, in the process of achieving sustainable development, predict the rejection of market values expressed by classical and neoclassical economics, as well as democratic and libertarian values.

The Paris Agreement expresses the same values as Agenda 2030. (L 282/4) In accordance with Article 2(1), the Agreement aims to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication efforts. The Parties to the Agreement, as indicated in the Preamble, shall, when taking action on climate change, respect, promote and take into account commitments relating to human rights, health rights, the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and persons who are vulnerable, the right to development as well as gender equality, women's empowerment and inter-generational justice. Population reduction was thus directly included in the agreement, and abortion and euthanasia guarantee the fulfilment of the obligations of the states.

Undoubtedly, the acceptance and support of the concept by the Catholic Church, expressed, among other things, in the Encyclical of Pope Francis *Laudato Si*, is highly surprising (Laudato Si' 2015). The document includes both lament on the fate of the empowered 'Sister Earth,' who is suffering painfully from human activity[4], and the call for acceptance of the pressing challenge to protect

[4] *This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident*

our common home, which includes the concern to unite the whole human family in the pursuit of sustainable and integrated development (Laudato Si' 2015, point 13, p.12). In fact, the papal call for acceptance of sustainable development is a call for acceptance by Catholics of depopulation and the tools for its implementation. Speaking to members of Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences the Pope Francis calls for new 'supranational' authorities to enforce UN goals. He said: *When a supranational common good is clearly identified, there is need for a special legally constituted authority capable of facilitating its implementation … groups of neighboring nations — as is already the case — can strengthen their cooperation by attributing the exercise of certain functions and services to intergovernmental institutions that manage their common interests* (Montagna 2019). Thus, he clearly indicated the objectives of the sustainable development concept, which are to build a new global socio-economic order in the name of the common good and to establish management institutions without democratic legitimacy.

5. Depopulation-related projections of the population

The implementation of depopulation concepts on a global scale is directly reflected in the projections of fertility, population changes, and the population. The UN projections entitled *World Population to 2300* (UN DESA 2004) predicts a lasting decline in the number of women in all continents to two children by 2050 (Fig. 4). At the same time, the average annual rate of population change projections for 2100 assume a constant decrease in population in all regions of the world, with the reservation that in Europe negative rates will be maintained throughout the century, in Asia and South America they will be reached from 2060 (Fig. 5). (UN DESA 2017) As a result of the actions taken, the total population should be kept stable at 9 billion people, as an average option. In the low – the most desirable – variant, the UN forecasts, in the 2300 perspective, that the population will decrease to 2.3 billion people (Fig. 6).

in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she "groans in travail" (Rom 8:22)… (Laudato Si 2015, p.3). The dogmatic evaluation of considerations directly related to the pagan cult of 'Mother Gaia' goes beyond the subject of this article.

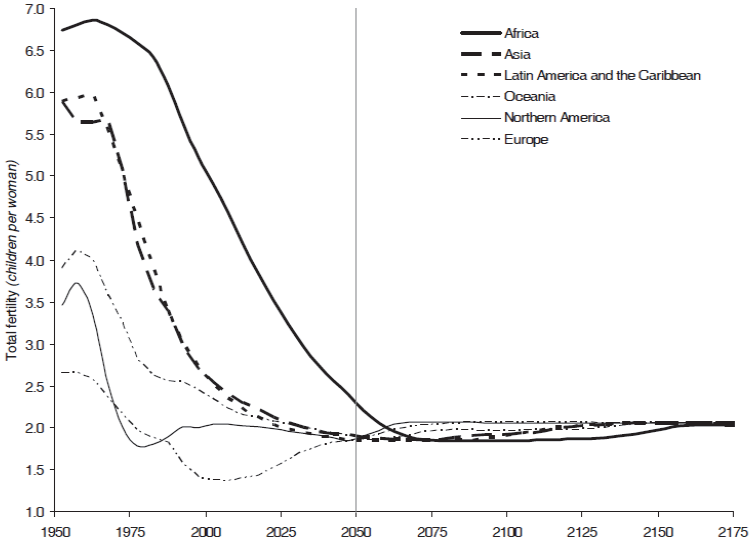


Fig. 4 Total fertility, major areas, estimates and medium scenario: 1950-2175

Source: UN DESA 2004

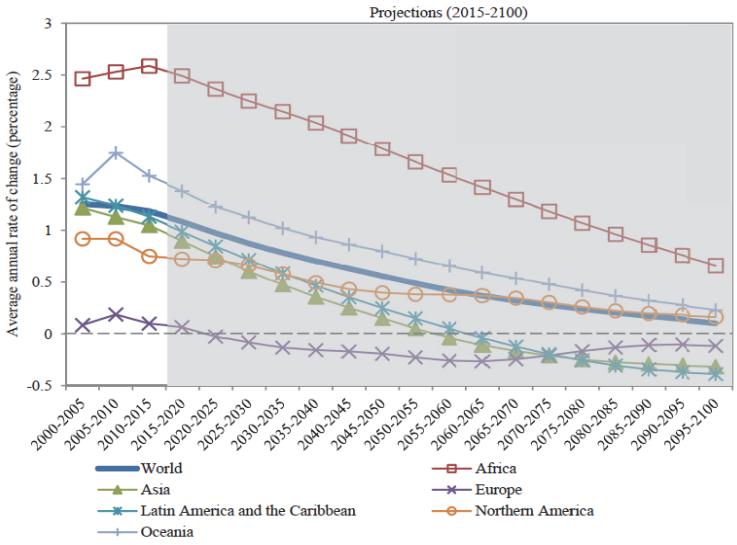


Fig. 5. Average annual rate of population change for the world and by region, estimates, 2000-2015, and medium-variant projection 2015-2100

Source: UN DESA 2017

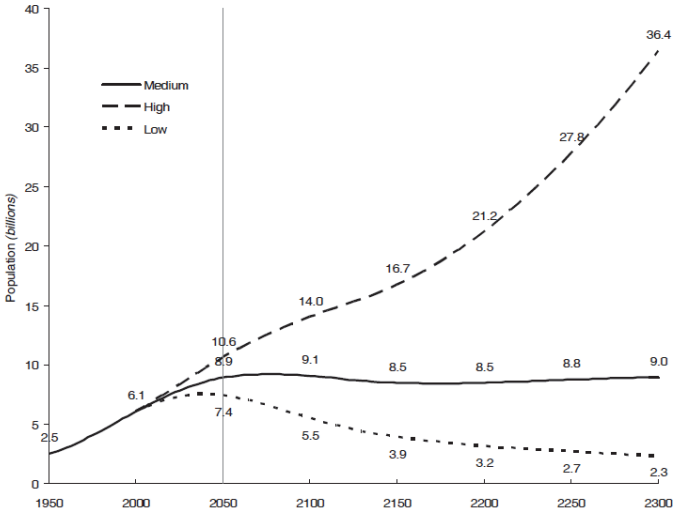


Fig. 6. Estimated world population: 1950-2000, and projections: 2000-2300

Source: UN DESA 2004

The depopulation process is also forecast for Poland. The UN DESA[5] population projections for Poland forecast a steady downward trend over the next eighty years. According to the projections, by 2030 the population will have decreased to 36.6 million, by 2050 to 32.4 million and by 2100 will have reached 21 million people (UN DESA 2017, p. 26). Total fertility (live births per woman) by 2050 will remain at a level not exceeding 1.4, 1.56 in 2050 and 1.76 in 2100 (UN DESA 2017, p. 35).

6. Mechanisms and tools for the implementation of depopulation

The problem of global overpopulation is widely discussed in the scientific literature. To a limited extent, due to the controversial nature of the issue, the tools used to implement depopulation are analysed. The depopulation tools used are differentiated according to the level of development and wealth of the region, or the country in which they are used. The aim of their application is to induce structural changes leading to ageing of societies and loss of natural growth. Mechanisms and instruments are of a legal, psychological and economic nature.

[5] Department of Economic and Social Affairs/Population Division.

Worldwide, since the 1970s, propaganda has been carried out to convince people of the global overpopulation and the global environmental dangers resulting from the population growth. It coexists with paradigms questioning humanity in the prenatal period or presenting the birth of man in the context of increasing greenhouse gas emissions and negative impact on the environment. An example of an approach is an article by S. Wynes and K. Nicholas, in which the authors identify four strong (low-emission) measures that contribute to systemic change and significantly reduce annual personal emissions: having one fewer child (58.6 tonnes CO_2-equivalent (tCO_2e) emission reductions per year), living car-free (2.4 tCO_2e saved per year), voiding airplane travel (1.6 tCO_2e saved per roundtrip transatlantic flight), eating a plant-based diet (0.8 tCO_2e saved per year). (Wynes, Nicholas 2017, p.1) It should be noted that most of the UN's catastrophic visions of overpopulation have not materialised (see State of the World 1984: A Worldwatch Institute Report on Progress toward a Sustainable Society. Edited by Lester R. Brown., New York: W.W. Norton, 1984).

Conscious parenthood and reproductive rights of women are promoted in both developed and developing countries, as expressed in the right to universal, unpaid and on-demand abortion and access to contraception. The promotion of reproductive rights is accompanied by the promotion of euthanasia of the elderly, the sick (including those suffering from mental illness, depression, alcoholism), as well as those who have problems with their daily duties. Reproductive rights are enforced by international bodies. For example, among the criteria used by the Council of Europe to assess Member States' respect for human rights is criterion 4.5 *Health and sexual and reproductive rights*, which includes access to sexual education, access to contraception, and access to safe and legal abortion (Muižnieks 2016). Contrary to the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights and the judgements of the European Court of Human Rights, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe calls on European states to facilitate access to abortion, citing famous judgments in such cases (ROP 2019). The effectiveness of actions to promote abortion as a tool of depopulation is evidenced by the fact that, according to available estimates, between 1990 and 2016 approximately 1.5 billion unborn children were killed, which is more than 20% of the current global population. On average, between 2010 and 2014, 25% of pregnancies in the world ended with abortion, including 30% in Europe (Guttmacher Institute 2018).

The supporters of depopulation in developed countries are opposed to any systemic measures promoting the family and encouraging an increase in fertility rate. Such actions are presented as a waste of public money. Hedonistic attitudes promoted among young people translate into unwillingness to marry and take responsibility for the family, as well as low fertility rates. People are

encouraged to give up having children in the name of caring about the climate[6] or their future (Canadian action NO FUTURE, NO CHILDREN, in which participants declare: *I pledge not to have children until I am sure my government will ensure a safe future for them*[7]). Discrediting the role and value of the family is accompanied by the promotion of the substitution of intimate relations between humans and sex-robots and the promotion of love for animals as a substitute for motherhood and fatherhood. The process of subjectification and attribution of strictly human characteristics and needs to both robots (Słowik 2018) and animals is observed. Co-existence with robots, surrounding animals with love is to prevent the emergence of psychiatric and psychological problems of members of future societies deprived of natural human relations.

In countries building competitiveness based on cheap labour, remuneration is a depopulation factor. Low remuneration discourages people from having children whose parents are unable to provide the expected education, care, and start into adult life. They become a strong motive to seek work abroad. The strategy of offering cheap labour enables economic growth to be achieved in a short period of time. In the long run, it results in labour shortages, the need to open up to labour immigration, wage increases and, consequently, a loss of competitiveness to the benefit of poor countries. Contemporary economic migration – unlike migration in the past – is not compensated by natural increase, driven by high birth rates and low proportions at older ages (Jackson 2014, p. 4).

7. Conclusions

The concept of sustainable development through depopulation, which sees man as a form of capital equivalent to the natural environment and economic capital, is contrary to natural law, deprives future generations of the right to exist and is morally reprehensible in the light of the Judeo-Christian system of values. This concept should be seen as an attempt to reject civil liberties and the democratic system as such, which are constitutionally guaranteed by democratic states, in favour of a dictatorship exercised by organisations and individuals that care about the subjectively understood welfare of the planet.

In the economic dimension, the implementation of the concept of sustainable development through depopulation is an attempt to build a model of an economic system that rejects free market values, in which the type and amount of production and demand will be determined by the power that is currently difficult to

[6] See: HRH The Duke of Sussex, *HRH The Duke of Sussex Interviews Dr Jane Goodall For The September Issue*, https://www.vogue.co.uk/article/prince-harry-jane-goodall-september-2019-issue (access on 21.09.2019).

[7] See: http://www.nofuturepledge.ca/# (access on 21.09.2019).

define. The reduction of the population, both globally and nationally, will potentially involve a number of negative phenomena, such as the collapse of domestic and, consequently, global financial system, the collapse of pension systems, as well as the insolvency of states. The course of these processes can be analysed using the example of Japan, a country experiencing dramatic change in the size, age structure, and spatial distribution of its population. The process of ageing and depopulation is felt in all areas of social, economic, cultural, and political life. Rural areas and medium-sized cities are characterised by a lack of any economic activity, abandonment of property, destruction and loss of value of property, lack of births, abandonment and deterioration of agricultural land and the encroachment of forests into urban areas. Due to similar patterns of socio-economic development, similar processes are expected in the near future in the rest of East and Southeast Asia (Matanle 2014).

In the light of the considerations carried out, the rejection of the depopulation concept should be postulated. Sustainable development should be a concept based on natural law, democratic values, sustainable consumption, and a fair distribution of resources and wealth. A factor in increasing wealth should be the desire to meet the needs of an increasing number of people, high quality and sustainable products. The economic mechanism must meet the criteria set out in the EU concept of a circular economy, in which the waste of resources is minimised and the category of waste does not exist. The realisation of such a concept of sustainable development requires the rejection by developed countries of the paradigm of the continuous increase in unjustified consumption.

It should also be noted that the continuation of depopulation activities by Western countries, in confrontation with China's global expansion, poses a real threat to the existence of these countries in the next 200 years. It should be predicted that the continuation of depopulation measures will lead to China gaining global dominance in both economic and population terms.

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Abstract

The aim of the paper is to characterize depopulation trends in the concept of sustainable development and to analyse their impact on structural changes in the population in the global perspective and the resulting economic consequences. The roots of depopulation trends were presented. Global approaches in the perception of population as a factor of economic growth and development were characterized. The problem of depopulation in selected international programming, strategic, and religious documents was analysed. To a limited extent, due to the controversial nature of the issue, tools implementing depopulation were presented. The economic and social consequences of the decrease in the population were indicated.

Keywords:
sustainable development**,** centrally planned economy, human capital, population policy, depopulation, world population projections

Depopulacja w koncepcji zrównoważonego rozwoju

Streszczenie

Celem artykułu jest charakterystyka nurtów depopulacyjnych w koncepcji zrównoważonego rozwoju oraz analiza ich wpływu na przemiany strukturalne ludności w ujęciu globalnym i wynikające z tego konsekwencje ekonomiczne. Przedstawione zostały korzenie trendów depopulacyjnych. Scharakteryzowano globalne podejścia w postrze-

ganiu liczby ludności jako czynnika wzrostu gospodarczego i rozwoju. Analizie poddany został problem depopulacji w wybranych międzynarodowych dokumentach programowych, strategicznych oraz religijnych. W ograniczonym zakresie – ze względu na kontrowersyjność zagadnienia – przedstawione zostały narzędzia urzeczywistniające depopulację. Wskazane zostały konsekwencje ekonomiczno-społeczne zmniejszania się liczby ludności.

Słowa kluczowe:
zrównoważony rozwój, ekonomia centralnie planowana, kapitał ludzki,
polityka ludnościowa, depopulacja, globalne prognozy ludności